

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Talking Points

Wednesday, February 22, 2017

CSSD, DOC

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Hi, My name is Kristie Scott, the CEO of Perception Programs. I am writing to comment on H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Perception Programs has the pleasure of running four CSSD programs and two (soon to be three) DOC residential programs. We respectfully ask the Committee to support the Governor's budget proposal to continue conversion of state-run services to one in which services are provided through the nonprofit system. The proposal before you includes conversion of certain mental health and substance abuse services, but we believe that there exist additional opportunities for the state shift more services into the community to save money, and reinvest those funds into raising rates and improving services for everyone.

We are concerned with the reduction in funding of certain services in the CSSD budget and respectfully ask the Committee to restore this funding:

- The holdbacks in fiscal year 2017 were particularly devastating to providers. This budget annualizes those reductions (\$20 million in each FY to the Judicial Branch), which will negatively affect the people those programs serve, resulting in layoffs, program closures and service disruptions. These programs provide important transitioning services which are known to greatly reduce recidivism. We ask the legislature not to annualize them into the next biennium.
- Funding for Alternatives Incarceration in the Community (reduction of \$3 million in each FY);
- Funding for Juvenile Alternative Incarceration (reduction of \$5 million in each FY)
- Support and expansion of Reentry Programs have historically served as an extensive cost savings measure, which not only increases public safety, but strengthens the very fabric of our communities. As you continue efforts to address the state budget crisis, it is essential to view the support of community-based, reentry services provided by nonprofits as an investment in social justice and the welfare of our state.
- The impact of the reduction in funding for the Alternatives in the Community Services within the CSSD budget is amplified by reductions to reentry services in other areas of the Governor's Budget, including employment programs funded by the Department of Labor, which negatively affect the ability of formerly incarcerated individuals to gain meaningful employment, affordable housing, and other wrap-around services.

- We urge your continued support of the Second Chance Society Initiatives. However, it is critical to acknowledge that the state's ability to effectively achieve any of the goals set forth is directly related to the strength and viability of the nonprofit provider network of community justice services.

We are also concerned with the reduction in funding of certain services in the DOC budget and respectfully ask the Committee to restore this funding:

- Funding for Community Support Services are reduced by \$1 million in each fiscal year. Support and expansion of Reentry Programs have historically served as an extensive cost savings measure, which not only increases public safety, but strengthens the very fabric of our communities. As you continue efforts to address the state budget crisis, it is essential to view the support of community-based, reentry services provided by nonprofits as an investment in social justice and the welfare of our state.
- The impact of the reduction in funding for Community Support Services within the DOC budget is amplified by reductions to reentry services in other areas of the Governor's Budget, including employment programs funded by the Department of Labor, which negatively affect the ability of formerly incarcerated individuals to gain meaningful employment, affordable housing, and other wrap-around services.
- Funding for Inmate Medical Services is reduced by \$3 million in each fiscal year due to the declining prison population. We request that the state reinvest a portion of these cost savings in the nonprofit providers who have experienced additional reductions to their resources by implementing the medical care which has shifted to the community in the absence of the UConn/Correctional Managed Health Care model.
- We urge your continued support of the Second Chance Society Initiatives. However, it is critical to acknowledge that the state's ability to effectively achieve any of the goals set forth is directly related to the strength and viability of the nonprofit provider network of community justice services.
- The holdbacks in fiscal year 2017 were particularly devastating to providers. This budget annualizes those reductions (\$10.7 million in each FY), which will negatively affect the people those programs serve, resulting in layoffs, program closures and service disruptions. We ask the legislature not to annualize them into the next biennium.

Every year we ask (beg) for your help so we can continue to serve our clients so they can have a better life and ultimately the communities across CT benefit from these services. Every year we continue to function with no increases for over 8 years. This year we offer a solution as I mentioned above that will support nonprofits and save the state money. It is essential that this shift happen now.

Thank you for reading and please feel free to contact me with any questions at Kristie.scott@perceptionprograms.org or 860-450-7122.

Respectfully- Kristie Scott, LCSW